

**MUSEUM DISTRICT WALK PROJECT
SECOND TOWN HALL MEETING**

March 6, 2003, 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center
2020 Hermann Drive

TOWN HALL MEETING OVERVIEW

The SLA Design Team has conducted extensive public involvement activities to solicit comments and suggestions about the Museum District to be taken in consideration for the Museum District Walk Project. Public involvement was obtained through surveys as well as “walkability tours.” In addition of public involvement the design team has developed streetscape design concepts that can be applied throughout the Museum District.

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was introduced by Patricia Rincon-Kallman, Assistant Director, City of Houston Planning & Development Department. She indicated that the Museum District Walk Project is part of infrastructure enhancements that the City has been implementing as part of the Main Street improvement process.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Susan Young, President of the South Main Center Association and representing the Houston Museum District, provided general background leading to the Museum District Walk Project.

PRELIMINARY PROJECT DESIGN CONCEPTS

Keiji Asakura, Principal in charge of the SLA Design Team, made a presentation on the design concepts developed for the Museum District. Asakura’s presentation included:

- Overview of existing streetscape conditions in the Museum District;
- Outline of design concept based on the Museum District entries and nodes;
- List of guiding concepts including: sidewalks, pedestrian safety, sense of place, landscape, way finding, art and activities;
- Wider sidewalks with trees, benches, and light that offer pedestrians a place to rest;
- Crosswalks with eight foot 90-degree ramps with bollards;
- Create a pedestrian friendly environment around Mecom Fountain and Hermann Dr.;
- Pedestrian friendly museum plaza;
- Development of Museum District entries that are subtle and elegant;
- Create a pedestrian edge at St. Paul’s Church;
- Pedestrian improvements to Calumet Street at Fanning;
- Pedestrian edge on Binz at St. Paul’s Church parking lot;
- Light rail edge with planters;
- Preservation of oak trees;

- Implementation of wider walks and pedestrian lighting;
- Caroline/Binz planting area leading to the Holocaust Museum;
- Calumet pedestrian Plaza with traffic circle at Caroline and Calumet;
- Development of garden corridors on Calumet, Caroline and Crawford streets;
- Development of a Hermann Park edge;
- Art of walking is a pedestrian experience that addresses: sidewalks, lighting, landscape, safety, public art, way finding, and sense of place; and
- Incorporating a walking experience through text.

QUESTION AND ANSWERS

Is the south walkway of the Beck building on private property?

The design team has not investigated this.

Is the design team taking into consideration different types of sidewalk ramps, apron vs. right angle ramps?

The design team will be recommending right angle ramps only.

Why Le Branch Street, where the Children's Museum is located, has not been identified as one of the north-south signature streets?

Children's Museum is not part of the "heritage" corridor streets that include oak trees. But the Children's Museum is located on Binz Street, which is the signature street.

There is a need to provide resting areas for people that walk along the District. Has the design team taking this in consideration?

The design team has design elements that provide for these resting areas.

Museums should have extended hours during weekdays and weekends to allow for more nighttime activities.

Will the design include traffic calming strategies to enhance pedestrian safety?

The design team does not plan to include active traffic calming elements on Binz/Bissonnet but will enhance sidewalks and streetlights as an alternative to calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

There is a concern for pedestrian crossings on Montrose in front of the Glassel Art School and possibly like to include a median for pedestrian refuge.

The design team is aware of this and plans to address it by enhancing pedestrian crosswalks.

The Design Team needs to coordinate work with Museum of Natural Science master plan.

The design team is meeting with stakeholders and identifying master plans from various institutions.

The district should have more outdoor cafes to create people activities.

This is out of scope of the design team but comments will be included on design team report.

There isn't enough space on Binz Street to include coffee shops.

This is out of scope with design team but comments will be included on design team report.

The Mecom Fountain roundabout is a problem and it is hard to solve. Any solutions must take in consideration it heritage and historic aspect.

The design team will make recommendations to improve pedestrian safety along the perimeter of the roundabout but not to direct pedestrians to the fountain.

There is a concern about proper way finding. It has to be subtle. Is the design team considering way-finding elements?

Development of a way-finding system is out of scope but the team includes graphic designers that will provide some graphic elements.